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## **FORMER CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT BRETT M. PFEFFER PLEADS GUILTY IN BRIBERY SCHEME**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A former legislative assistant to a member of the U.S. Congress pleaded guilty in Alexandria, Virginia today to a two-count criminal information charging him with conspiracy to commit bribery and aiding and abetting the solicitation of bribes by a member of Congress, U.S. Attorney Paul J. McNulty of the Eastern District of Virginia and Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division announced today.

Brett M. Pfeffer, 37, of Herndon, Virginia, entered his plea earlier today in U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of Virginia before the Honorable T.S. Ellis, III. Pfeffer faces up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000 under the terms of the plea agreement. As part of his plea, Pfeffer has agreed to cooperate with law enforcement officials in an ongoing investigation.

According to the information, from 1995 through 1998, Pfeffer was employed as a legislative assistant by a member of the U.S. Congress, referred to as "Representative A." Pfeffer maintained a professional and social relationship with Representative A after he left employment in the member's office, according to the information. By 2004, Pfeffer began to work as president of an investment company based in McLean, Virginia, which was controlled by an individual who later became a cooperating witness for the government, referred to in the information as the "CW."

According to the information, in 2004, Pfeffer introduced the CW to Representative A. The information charges that Representative A, in turn, introduced the CW to the founder of a Kentucky-based company planning to provide broadband services, including high-speed Internet service and cable television service, to the country of Nigeria over the existing copper wire telephone line infrastructure operated by the government-controlled Nigerian Telephone Company. CW's company agreed to invest \$45 million for the exclusive right to use the Kentucky-based company's technology and equipment in this deal.

The information charges that Pfeffer, as a representative of the CW, was solicited by Representative A for bribes in return for Representative A's agreement to perform various official acts to promote the Nigeria deal. According to the information, Pfeffer passed along these bribe solicitations from Representative A to the CW. Pfeffer acknowledged in the plea agreement that he stood to make significant financial gains through his employment arrangement with CW and CW's company in the event Representative A's official acts were successful in promoting the deal in Nigeria. The information further charges that in exchange for certain bribes, Representative A performed official acts designed to promote a similar telecommunications business deal planned to be implemented in the country of Ghana.

“Ensuring honest government for American Taxpayers is among the highest priorities of the Department of Justice,” said U.S. Attorney McNulty. “This conviction is another demonstration of our commitment to that principle.”

“Today this defendant admitted to a crime which, at its core, is a bribery scheme involving a public official. Such schemes deprive citizens of the integrity and honest services expected of our government,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher of the Criminal Division. “The Justice Department will aggressively investigate and prosecute these illegal schemes.”

The case is being prosecuted by Mark D. Lytle, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria, Virginia and Trial Attorney Michael K. Atkinson of the Fraud Section of the Criminal Division at the U.S. Department of Justice, Washington. The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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